

Section 4.32
US-131 Improvement Study
St. Joseph County, Michigan
Elkhart County, Indiana

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Project Specific Mitigation Summary
“Green Sheet”

I. Social and Economic Environment

- a. Aesthetic and Visual: To mitigate aesthetic and visual impacts, landscaping opportunities will be investigated during the design phase to enhance the visual characteristics of the proposed project.
- b. Emergency Services: To provide an adequate amount of time to adjust emergency response plans and school district routes, MDOT will coordinate with emergency service providers and local school districts prior to the beginning of or implementation of any new phase of construction. Coordination will be maintained throughout construction.
- c. Noise: Upon selection of a Preferred Alternative, an additional noise analysis will be performed and appropriate noise abatement mitigation measures will be considered. Mitigation measures such as noise barriers or earth berms will be considered in accordance with current MDOT noise abatement criteria.

II. Natural Environment

- a. Wetlands: The Build Alternatives are forecasted to impact between 0.51 and 57.87 acres of wetland. Where wetland impacts cannot be avoided, MDOT will restore previously existing wetlands or create new wetlands in accordance with Part 303, Wetland Protection, of Act 451, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act of 1994. Constructed wetlands will be designed to replicate existing wetland types, hydrological functions, and wildlife habitat of the impacted wetlands.

Wetland mitigation would occur within the St. Joseph watershed with preference given to sites in the sub watersheds of White Pigeon and Rocky Rivers. Mitigation ratios of 2:1 for floodplain forest and forested wetlands, and 1.5:1 for emergent, scrub-shrub, and open water wetlands are proposed.

- b. Threatened and Endangered Species: Upon selection of a Preferred Alternative, potential impacts to threatened and endangered species will be analyzed and documented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. If impacts are identified to state or federally listed plant or animal species then consultation with the MDNR and USFWS will be initiated to determine appropriate mitigation.

III. Cultural Environment

- a. Historic: Upon the selection of a Preferred Alternative, MDOT will coordinate with the SHPO regarding any potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures that may be necessary.
- b. Archaeological: Once a Preferred Alternative is identified, a Phase I Archaeological Survey will be completed. Phase II Archaeological Site evaluations will be conducted on those sites determined to be potentially significant.
- c. Coordination: If impacts to historic or archaeological resources are identified, coordination with the SHPO will include a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between SHPO, MDOT, and FHWA. The MOA will be included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

IV. Construction

- a. Traffic Flow: MDOT will coordinate with local communities to determine desirable detour routes and access points for local communities to minimize delays, congestion, and access restrictions while also maintaining through traffic.

Coordination with the Norfolk and Southern Railroad will be required with any alternative that may interfere or influence rail traffic.

MDOT will maintain public awareness throughout the project by providing general information, addressing public concerns, and providing specific information such as duration and location of detours, lane closures, alternative routes, upcoming activities, and anticipated construction deadlines.

- b. Navigable Waterways: The contractor may be required to maintain a navigable channel during all phases of the project to include the three known St. Joseph River events (Three Rivers Water Festival, Great Lake Hydroplane Championship, and the Modified Hydroplane US Title Series). Maintaining a navigable channel may include the placement of signs both upstream and downstream of the construction area that clearly indicates the location of the navigable channel and the lighting of barges or other obstructions at night.
- c. Wildlife Corridors: Once a Recommended Alternative is determined, all required river crossing structures will include a wildlife corridor of at least 6 feet in width on either side of the river channel.